

Voluntary Monitoring Equipment Loan Program

EPA Region 1-Boston

Geographic location or area of activity: New England

Description of activity: EPA along with the states, territories and tribes has been monitoring our nation's waters for over 35 years under the Clean Water Act. During this period, EPA-New England staff and our state partners have utilized our limited budget to monitor and assess approximately 30% to 50% of New England's waterbodies. The region is increasing its ability to monitor the 49,700 river and stream miles, 1.6 million lake and pond acres, and 3,856 square miles of estuaries in New England with the help of volunteer groups who use EPA-owned equipment. The New England state environmental agencies are very supportive of the loan program and readily assist the volunteers with equipment use and data analysis.

Previously, statistical estimations of the conditions of the region's surface waters could only be made at a relatively large scale. Now, detailed assessments are possible at finer resolutions in many places so that immediate remedial actions can be identified. Our approach involves using our purchasing system to acquire monitoring equipment to lend to groups on a long-term basis. The program is open to all volunteer monitoring groups in New England. Recipients are expected to generate useable data in accordance with agency-approved Quality Assurance Project Plans and to upload data to EPA's national water quality data base.

Thirty-two equipment loans, amounting to nearly \$80,000 in value, have been provided through two loan rounds conducted in 2006 and 2007. Selections in 2007 put a premium on volunteer coverage of urban watersheds to further EPA-New England's Environmental Justice objectives. Examples of monitoring and analyses supported through the program include: macroinvertebrate and habitat monitoring, water flow, plankton monitoring, dissolved oxygen, pH and temperature along with GPS location. At least 150 new volunteers were added in 2007, as compared to 2006, which has expanded geographic coverage, sampling parameters and data collection frequencies. We estimate that the number of new data points for all loan recipients is at least 10,000 for the first year.

Interagency partners: New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Local partners: Mystic River Watershed Association (MA), Housatonic Valley Association (MA), Jones River Marine Ecology Center (MA), Charles River Watershed Association (MA), Taunton River Watershed Alliance (MA), Webster Lake Association (MA), Salem Sound Coastwatch (MA), Connecticut River Watershed Council (MA), Merrimack River Watershed Council (MA), Missisquoi River Basin Association (VT), Northwoods Stewardship Center (VT), Connecticut River Watch Program (CT), Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor (CT), Israel River Volunteer Advisory Group (NH), Hodgson Brook Watershed Restoration Project (NH), NH DES Lake Assessment Program (NH), Pleasant River Watershed Council and Narraguagus River Watershed Council (ME), Highland Lake Association (ME), Spruce Creek Association (ME), Union

River Watershed Coalition (ME), Presumpscot River Watch (ME), East Lyme Harbor Management/Shellfish Commission (CT), CT DEP Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse (CT), Northeastern University Muddy River Water Quality Monitoring Program (MA), Pembroke Watershed Association (MA), Merrimack River Watershed Council (MA), Groundwork Lawrence (MA), Roger Frymire (MA), Blackstone Academy Charter School and Blackstone River Watershed Council (RI), Friends of Missisquoi Bay (VT)

Activity URLs: <http://www.epa.gov/region01/lab/specialprojects.html>
<http://www.epa.gov/region01/lab/volmonequiploan.html>



Volunteer Monitoring